

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Planning



Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes that sound planning is a partnership effort with the people it serves and that the end product must be broadly supported by them as well as fit the capabilities of the property. The DNR encourages citizen input throughout the planning process. This public participation plan outlines the strategy for soliciting public review and input into the update of the master plan for the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway (LWSR).

The master plan update will apply to the DNR managed lands only and will be based on and influenced by existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, the best capabilities of the resources, judgment of resource management professionals and public preferences. The local and regional recreational supply, economy and social conditions will also be considered. The approved master plan will represent the best role of the property in its local, regional and statewide context.



Planning Process

The master planning process is divided into three primary phases:

Phase 1

Phase one is the preparatory work. Reliable, current information on the property's resources and public uses, as well the regional demands and opportunities is needed as a foundation for the planning process. Prior to the announcement that planning is starting, the department is busy updating natural resource and recreational use data for the property and collecting regional data in order to better understand the property's current and potential functional role in the region.

Phase 2

Phase two is plan development and public involvement. It begins with a formal public announcement that the property's master plan will be updated. The announcement is soon followed by a public open house to share information on the process, and gather public feedback on important issues to be addressed in the plan. Considering the fact that the LWSR has been in place for 25 years, the master plan we are developing will be an update to the existing master plan for the property. The new master plan will provide updated resource information and address management and recreational issues that have been identified in recent years but the overall direction of the property management will likely not change significantly.

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Phase 3

Phase three involves the presentation of the draft master plan to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

Opportunities for Participation in Planning

The department's goals for public involvement in master planning are to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of their favorite properties, and to provide a means for interested people to stay informed about the property and planning progress. Public review and comment will be formally sought at key milestone points during the plan's development and approval process. However, it should be noted that public comments are welcome at any time. The formal public input points in the process are:

- at the beginning of the plan development process (Phase 2 discussed above) to help identify important issues to be considered in the plan;
- to review and comment on the draft master plan and its environmental assessment; and
- lastly, the Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to provide input to them when they consider approval of the proposed master plan.

Ways To Make Your Voice Heard

Public meetings: DNR staff will hold informal public meetings at key points of the master planning process to present and discuss information on the property and plan proposals, and to listen to your comments and suggestions. To reduce driving distances these meetings will be held at locations on the east and the west end of the riverway.

Questionnaires: The department will be issuing one or more questionnaires to survey the public on various master planning issues. Look for a questionnaire at the open houses and on the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Master Plan website.

Other ways to comment: If you are unable to attend a meeting or if you think of comments you want to give after the meeting you may submit comments to the planning team by email, postal service or by phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

How the Department will Provide Planning Information to You

Issue Press Releases

Press releases will be issued at key stages of the project to announce public meetings, provide information updates and to solicit public comments.

Direct Mailings (email and postal)

The department is using GovDelivery, an electronic notification list, to keep interested parties (landowners, user groups, sporting clubs, environmental groups, service groups, local government, state officials, affected Indian Tribes, local and state newspapers)

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informed about upcoming events and discussions. The email system is used at key points in the planning process, to provide information about the property and planning issues; and to announce meetings, decisions, and other planning developments. To sign-up for GovDelivery notifications, go the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway home page located at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/MasterPlanning/LowerWisconsin/> and click on "Subscribe to Updates." You may also sign up for the mailing list by contacting the department at the address or phone number listed at the end of this document.

Master Plan Web Page

The department will set up a special master planning web page where information about the property, the planning process, draft plan documents, notices, planning progress reports and other important planning information may be accessed.

Planning Reports

After each formal public input step the department will summarize the results for your review. Additional progress reports will be posted, if needed, on the master planning website to keep you informed on the status of the plan's development.

Special Meetings

If needed, additional public meetings may be held at various stages of the planning process to discuss specific issues in depth. All public meetings will be announced ahead of time. Focus group meetings may be held with selected representatives to work through special management issues or other concerns that may arise.

Consultation with Other Governmental Units

Throughout the planning process, the master planning team will also be consulting with local governments, state and federal agencies, and affected Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis on mutual planning issues.

How Plan Decisions will be Made

To develop an effective property master plan, the department listens to many voices. Recreation users, commercial interests, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials, other government agencies, tribal representatives, and other interested persons or groups are all encouraged to participate. Input received at each major step in the planning process will be considered as the plan is developed.

Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the plan will be made based on the type of property, its capabilities, and the best role of the property in its local, regional and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Further, the plan must comply with applicable Federal Laws, State Statutes, Administrative and Department Codes, and facility design standards. While a broad range of interests will be listened to and considered in developing a proposed master plan, the final decision-making responsibility and authority on the master plan rests with the DNR's citizen policy-making Natural Resources Board.

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CONTACTS:

To provide comments or suggestions on the planning process, to receive materials, or to sign up for the mailing list, contact:

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For property-specific comments or questions, contact:

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